

IN THE CLAIMS

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application. An identifier indicating the status of each claim is provided.

Listing of Claims

1. (Currently Amended) A copyright management system for managing lease of arbitrary copyrighted information contents to be distributed from a copyright information lease service provider to a user, the system comprising:

an information lease management apparatus for adding utilization condition information concerning lease of copyrighted information contents to copyrighted information contents, and processing the information so as to be distributed to the user;

an information processing apparatus for receiving the copyrighted information contents and the utilization condition information distributed from the information lease management apparatus and determining whether a lease period is expired; and

communication means for connecting the information lease management apparatus and information processing apparatus,

wherein the information processing apparatus deletes the received copyrighted information contents in accordance with the utilization condition information when a lease period is expired and allows continued utilization of copyrighted information contents when a lease period is not expired.

2. (Previously Presented) An information lease management system as claimed in claim 1, further comprising:

an erasable recording medium with a time limit storage function,

wherein the erasable recording medium stores said copyrighted information contents, and is connected to said information processing apparatus, and

wherein when a lease period has expired, the rented copyrighted information contents are automatically erased based on utilization condition information.

3. (Previously Presented) An information lease management system as claimed in claim 2,

wherein said recording medium has a data erasure mechanism for automatically erasing said copyrighted information contents when the recording medium is removed from said information processing apparatus.

4. (Previously Presented) An information lease management system as claimed in claim 1,

wherein a contract concerning lease of said copyrighted information contents is made between said information lease service provider and a user.

5. (Currently Amended) An information lease management system as claimed in claim 1, characterized in that wherein Internet, telephone lines, satellite communication line or lease communication lines are used as said communication means.

6. (Currently Amended) A copyright management apparatus for managing lease of copyrighted information contents distributed from a copyright information lease service provider to a user, the apparatus comprising:

data processing means for adding utilization condition information concerning lease information of copyrighted information contents to a user; and

communication means for distributing to a user the copyrighted information contents having the utilization condition information added thereto by the data processing means or receiving response information from the user,

wherein the utilization condition information is checked and indicates when that the copyrighted information contents should be deleted when a lease period is expired and allows continued utilization of copyrighted information contents when a lease period is not expired.

7. (Previously Presented) An information lease management apparatus as claimed in claim 6, further comprising:

a database storing the copyrighted information contents to be leased to said user.

8. (Previously Presented) An information lease management apparatus as claimed in claim 6, further comprising at least menu screen information, describing a title of the copyrighted information contents stored in said database, is provided to the user.

9. (Previously Presented) An information lease management apparatus as claimed in claim 6, wherein at least a title of said copyrighted information contents, lease charge and lease period, and a list of said users are integrally managed.

10. (Previously Presented) An information lease management apparatus as claimed in claim 6, wherein, when an upper limit of an amount of money predetermined in accordance with a contract is provided, said data processing means obtains a cumulative utilization charge in which lease charges of said copyrighted information contents are cumulated; compares said upper limit of an amount of money and said cumulative utilization charge with each other; and

present lease rejection of said copyrighted information contents or a change of said upper limit of an amount of money when said cumulative utilization charge exceeds said upper limit of amount of money.

11. (Currently Amended) An apparatus for receiving copyrighted information contents leased from a copyright information lease service provider to a user, said apparatus comprising:

transmission and reception means for receiving copyrighted information contents having added thereto utilization condition information concerning lease information to the user;

data processing means for processing the copyrighted information contents received by the transmission and reception means and determining whether a lease period is expired; and

a recording medium connectable to the data processing means in order to store the copyrighted information contents,

wherein the data processing means ~~is provided so as to delete~~ the copyrighted information contents stored in a recording medium in accordance with the utilization condition information when a lease period is expired and allows continued utilization of copyrighted information contents when a lease period is not expired.

12. (Previously Presented) An information processing apparatus as claimed in claim 11,

wherein that said recording medium comprises a data erasure mechanism for, when the recording medium is removed from said data processing means, automatically erasing the copyrighted information contents stored in said storage means.

13. (Currently Amended) An information processing apparatus as claimed in claim 11, ~~characterized in that~~ wherein said data erasure mechanism comprises:

detection means for detecting the fact that the recording medium is removed from said data processing means; and

control means for controlling disconnection of power supply to storage means based on removal detection information caused by said detection means.

14. (Currently Amended) An information processing apparatus as claimed in claim 11, characterized in that wherein, when power supply to said recording medium is disconnected, there is provided a lock mechanism for fixing the recording means to said data processing means.

15. (Previously Presented) An information processing apparatus as claimed in claim 11, further comprising display means for displaying index information concerning said copyrighted information contents.

16. (Previously Presented) An information processing apparatus as claimed in claim 15,

wherein at least a menu screen describing a title of said copyrighted information contents is displayed on said display means.

17. (Previously Presented) An information processing apparatus as claimed in claim 16,

wherein arbitrary copyrighted information contents selected from said menu screen are distributed to said recording medium.

18. (Previously Presented) An information processing apparatus as claimed in claim 11, further comprising:

operation means operated so as to input setting information concerning lease of said copyrighted information contents.

19. (Previously Presented) An information processing apparatus as claimed in claim 11,

wherein an upper limit of an amount of utilization charge of the copyrighted information contents is set with respect to lease of said copyrighted information contents.

20. (Previously Presented) An information processing apparatus as claimed in claim 11,

wherein said utilization condition information contains a control program for selecting whether or not a lease period of said copyrighted information contents is extended.

21. (Previously Presented) An information processing apparatus as claimed in claim 11,

wherein, when age limitation is set with respect to lease of said copyrighted information contents, said utilization condition information contains a control program for inputting a predetermined user registered password number.

22. (Previously Presented) An information processing apparatus as claimed in claim 11,

wherein, when a lease period of said copyrighted information contents is arbitrarily set, said utilization condition information contains a control program for inputting a lease period of said copyrighted information contents.

23. (Currently Amended) A method of managing lease of copyrighted information contents distributed from a copyright information lease service provider to a user by using communication means, said method comprising the steps of:

making a contract concerning lease of copyrighted information contents in advance between the copyright information lease service provider and the user;

adding utilization condition information to copyrighted information contents to be distributed to the user based on the contract, and receiving copyrighted information contents having utilization condition information added thereto; and

checking the utilization condition information of the received copyrighted information contents as to whether a lease period is expired;

storing the received copyrighted information contents in a recording medium having an automatically erasable time limit storage function; and

deleting the copyrighted information contents stored in the recording medium in accordance with the utilization condition information when a lease period is expired; and

allowing continued utilization of copyrighted information contents in accordance with the utilization condition information when a lease period is not expired.

24. (Original) An information lease management method as claimed in claim 23, characterized in that Internet or communication lines such as telephone line or satellite communication lines are used.

25. (Previously Presented) An information lease management method as claimed in claim 23,

wherein, when said recording medium is attached to a data processing unit, and said storage medium is removed from said data processing unit, the copyrighted information contents contained in said recording medium is deleted.

26. (Previously Presented) An information lease management method as claimed in claim 23, further comprising the step of:

presenting a user with index information concerning a plurality of copyrighted information contents to be leased to said user.

27. (Previously Presented) An information lease management method as claimed in claim 26, further comprising the step of:

displaying at least a menu screen describing a title of said copyrighted information contents.

28. (Previously Presented) An information lease management method as claimed in claim 27, further comprising the step of:

distributing arbitrary copyrighted information contents selected from said menu screen.

29. (Previously Presented) An information lease management method as claimed in claim 23, further comprising the step of:

arbitrarily inputting a lease period of said copyrighted information contents with respect to a lease contract of said copyrighted information contents.

30. (Previously Presented) An information lease management method as claimed in claim 23, further comprising the step of:

setting an upper limit of an amount of money for utilization charge of said copyrighted information contents with respect to a lease contract of said copyrighted information contents.

31. (Previously Presented) An information lease management method as claimed in claim 30, further comprising the steps of:

when an upper limit of an amount of money is set with respect to a lease of said copyrighted information contents, obtaining a cumulative utilization charge in which at least lease charges of said copyrighted information contents are cumulated;

comparing said upper limit of an amount of money with said cumulative utilization charge; and

when said cumulative utilization charge exceeds said upper limit of an amount of money, presenting lease rejection of said copyrighted information contents or a change of said upper limit of an amount of money.

32. (Previously Presented) An information lease management method as claimed in claim 23,

wherein, when age limitation is set with respect to lease of said copyrighted information contents, a predetermined user registered password number is input.

33. (Previously Presented) An information lease management method as claimed in claim 23, further comprising the step of:

selecting whether or not the lease period of said copyrighted information contents is extended when a lease period of said copyrighted information contents has expired.

34. (Previously Presented) An information lease management method as claimed in claim 23, further comprising the step of:

integrally managing at least a title of said copyrighted information contents, lease charge and lease period, and a list of said users.

35. (Currently Amended) A computer readable medium storing a computer program for recording copyrighted information contents embedded with utilization condition information leased from a copyright information lease service provider to a user a computer, comprising the steps of:

checking the utilization condition information of the stored copyrighted information contents as to whether a lease period is expired;

deleting, when a predetermined lease period has expired, copyrighted information contents stored in the recording medium in accordance with utilization condition information; and

allowing continued utilization of copyrighted information contents in accordance with the utilization condition information when a lease period is not expired.

36. (Previously Presented) A recording medium as claimed in claim 35, wherein, when said recording medium is attached to data processing means and the recording medium is removed from said data processing means, a data erasure mechanism automatically erases the copyrighted information contents stored in the recording medium.

37. (Previously Presented) A recording medium as claimed in claim 35 wherein said data erasure mechanism comprises:

detection means for detecting the fact that the recording medium is removed from said data processing means; and

control means for controlling disconnection of power supply to storage means based on removal detection information caused by said detection means.

38. (Previously Presented) A recording medium as claimed in claim 35, wherein, when power supply to the recording medium is disconnected, there is provided a lock mechanism for fixing the recording medium to said data processing means.